



Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts

RESEARCH ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CARTOON CHARACTERS FOR MALAYSIAN CHILDREN

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**Bachelor of Applied Arts with Honours
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**RESEARCH ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CARTOON CHARACTERS
FOR MALAYSIAN CHILDREN**

Chong Thing Hoong

**This project is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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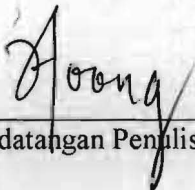
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Abstract

Cartoons have been accepted as a medium of communication. Cartoon acts as an alternative communication tool not only to humor, but also help to stimulate reading interest among children. Its simplicity, minimal usage of text and interesting illustration, communicates a great deal of message. My objective is to create a unique style and local identity of cartoon character. The visual premise of the final project is to portray good values, cooperation and living harmoniously as Malaysian toward national unity and nation building.

Abstrak

Kartun telah diterima sebagai salah satu medium di dalam komunikasi. Kartun bukan sahaja menjadikan salah satu alternative di dalam komunikasi untuk cerita jenaka malah ia mendorong dan memupuk sikap minat membaca dalam diri kanak-kanak. Kandungan yang mudah dan ringkas, serta ilustrasi yang menarik dapat menyampaikan mesej dengan lebih baik dan mudah difahami. Objektif projek ini adalah untuk menghasilkan sesuatu watak kartun yang unik, mempunyai stail yang tersendiri serta berdasarkan ciri-ciri budaya tempatan. Visual premis projek tahun akhir ini akan memaparkan nilai-nilai moral yang murai, sifat kerjasama antara satu sama lain dan hidup dalam keharmonian, seperti kesatuan kebangsaan dan bangunan Negara warga Malaysia.

CHAPTER 1

Background

1.1 History

The word “Cartoon” is derive from an Italian word called ‘cartone’, which mean hard paper or board¹ (p.2). Through the recordation of early art history, in era Russaine (1400s-1500s), cartoon has recognized as an art. In its original historical meaning, cartoon was a full-size drawing on the paper, the original sketches or patterns for large frescoes, oil paintings, tapestry, glass, mosaic work, and statuary². Painters were using cartoons in the production of frescoes to link the component parts of the composition accurately when painted onto plaster. Some cartoons, such as those painted by Raphel for the Vatican tapestries and a large collection by da Vinci, are wonderful and valuable works in their works³.

At the end of the eighteenth century, caricature has becomes very popular in England. A major topic for pictures of caricatures called “satire” then, or “cartoons” now, is marriage⁴. According to Sir Thomas Browne, the English doctor, the author of *Christian Moral* (first pub.1716), the word “caricature” is derive from an Italian word called ‘*caricatura*’, which mean to load.

A caricature is a portrait that exaggerates or distorts the basic essence of a person or thing to make identifiable visual likeness. Caricaturists try to create a similar sound’s of

^{1, 3, 4} Keener, Polley, 1992. *Cartooning*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

² <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cartoon> (25 September 2006)

name for the character in caricature and then leak their horrible side to public. Caricature had attracted everyone's attention because it involved the theme of case, act, law, and new inventions. It flourished with the "South Sea Bubble scandal," an affair of stock speculation and government's debt⁵ (p.3).

In the early nineteenth century, caricatures become popular. Caricaturists start to use the type of caricature with humorous drawing of politicians and local celebrities and printed on newspapers⁶.

In 1841, Punch, a British caricaturist, used his name to public a magazine, "*Punch*". It was a British weekly magazine of humorous and satire published from 1841 to 1992 and from 1996 to 2002. In 1843, Punch did an exhibition of cartoon for the proposed decoration of the new Houses of Parliament. He had satirized the exhibit designs with his own "cartoon" creations. It was responsible for the modern use of the word "cartoon" to refer to a comic drawing⁷.

In 1917, a Bureau of Cartoons has remarkably been established by the U.S. government, which encouraged patriotic cartoons. It was a weakness and dullness reigned. The act of criticizing was controlled. After the World War I, many subjects came out for caricaturists. The subjects with style of free swing, direct, and fearless post war times brought back funny, stinging cartoons again⁸(p.6).

In 1929, sober editorial cartoons, statements about Great Depression grimness began its popularity. It had noted down the example of "funny" cartoons in good times and

^{5,8,9} Keener, Polley, 1992. *Cartooning*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

⁶ (n.a.) (a.d.) *Caricature*. [On-line], Retrieved 25 September, 2006

⁷ (n.a.) (n.d.) *Punch Magazine*. [On-line], Retrieved 25 September, 2006

“serious” cartoons when wars and stressful times. Cartoons mock and spoof, but are also valuable records of their times⁹ (p.6).

1.2 Types of Cartoon

There are different types of cartoon available in the market for everyone, regardless of age, gender, race, and religion. Cartoon can be divided into three most common categories, which called Comic, Illustration, and Animation.

1.2.1 Comic

Comic is a type of visual art, it also a sequential art. It consists of the images that combine with text, and in the type of speech balloons or image caption. In the beginning, comics used to illustrate caricatures by caricaturists and to entertain audiences with humorous and insignificant stories. However, now it becomes a literary medium with many subgenres. Examples of some famous comics are *Naruto*, *Doreamon*, *Crayon Shin-Chan*, *Garfield*, *Ujang*, *Kampong Boy*, and *Old Master Q*.

In 1996, Will Eisner published *Graphic Storytelling & Visual Narrative* and pointed his opinion of comic in *Comics and Sequential Art*, which he defined comics as "...the printed arrangement of art and balloons in sequence, particularly in comic books."

Today, the printed comics are popular in comic strip and longer comic stories. Comic strip is a series of drawings inside panels that tell a story and printed in newspapers and magazines. It is known as a secondary material in the entertainment sections. However,

longer comic stories known as a primarily type of comic that create especially for comic books, graphic novels, fiction, and comic albums.

1.2.2 Illustration

An illustration is one of the elements of drawing, painting, photograph that stresses subject more than form. The aim of an illustration is to explain story, poem or a newspaper article with a visual depiction.

The earliest type of illustration was ancient cave paintings, which then followed by the printing press, illuminated manuscripts were hand-illustrated. Woodcut illustrations on books became available during the 15th century. The main process used for reproduction of illustrations during the 16th and 17th centuries was printing. At the end of the 18th century, lithography introduced to produce.¹⁰

The illustration is to clarify complicated concepts or objects that are difficult to describe in words. It is also intend for entertainment, as in greeting cards, or cover art for books and magazines, or for advertisement, as on posters. The functions of illustration such as

- To create faces of characters in a story.
- To show a number of examples of an item described in an academic textbook.
- To display step-wise sets of instructions in a technical manual.

¹⁰ (n.a.) (n.d.) *illustration*. [On-line], Retrieved 25 September, 2006

- To link brands to the ideas of human expression, individuality, and creativity.
- To create emotion.

1.2.3 Animation

Animation is the optical illusion of motion created by the continuous display of images of static elements. Examples of some famous animation are *The Incredibles*, *Pokemon*, *Mickey Mouse*, *Kampong Boy*, and *Power Puff Girl*.

The productions of film and video are refer to techniques by which each frame of a film or movie is produced individually. These frames may be created by computers, or by photographing a drawn or painted image, or by repeatedly making small changes to a model, and then photographing the result with a special animation camera. When the frames are strung together and the resulting film is viewed.

Early examples of attempts to capture the phenomenon of motion into a still drawing can be found in Palaeolithic cave paintings, where animals are shown with multiple legs in overlay positions, clearly attempting to express the observed movement. The phenakistoscope, zoetrope and praxinoscope, as well as the common flip book, were early animation devices to produce movement from sequential drawings using technological means, but animation did not really develop much further until the advent of motion picture film.

According to Fred Moore, animation had become a real world in caricature, which obeyed logical laws. "A natural action must be caricatured to constitute acting. Action as a

thing in itself has little sustaining interest for an audience. When action, portrayed graphically, is ordered it becomes a new form of acting.”¹¹(p.65)

1.3 Problem Statements

There are only few selective Malaysian-inspired cartoon characters are marketable internationally. Most of Malaysian based cartoon product only can be found in comics and videos; Merchandising is still unexplored. There is not a single shop selling these Malaysian cartoon characters or any of these cartoon related soft toys. Unlike some international cartoon characters soft toys, such as Mickey Mouse from Disney, Hello Kitty and Doreamon, which are available in most of the toy or gift shops. It seems like there is lack of campaign to promote Malaysian cartoon industries to global market.

1.4 Objectives

1. To study types of cartoon characters as preferred by children in Malaysia.
2. To analyze characteristics of selected cartoon characters.
3. To promote Malaysian cartoon industries.

¹¹ Giannalberto Bendazzi, 1995. *Cartoons: One Hundred Years of Cinema Animation*. London, England.: Indiana University Press

1.5 Scope of Research

The scope of this research includes investigation on the most favourite cartoon characteristics that children in Malaysia attracted to. However, the cartoon characteristics include the type of drawing technique which is easier memorized for children, the colour which is children most like to, the style of cartoon character which is most preferred by children, and the theme of the cartoon which is most suitable for children. At the end of the research, a cartoon will be produced and be promoted. It will be using the combination of most preferred cartoon characteristic by the children in Malaysia.

Chapter2

Methodology

2.1. Literature Reviews

In this section, we will discuss the cartoon characteristics about theme (section 2.1.1), element (section 2.1.2), and type of cartoon character (section 2.1.3).

2.1.1 Theme of cartoon

Theme is the subject or main idea in the story of cartoon. Most cartoons are divide the theme into family, school, fictional, scientific and others. According to Daniel Chandler pointed out in his article of Television Violence and Children's Behaviour, "As in all social science research, other factors are likely to be involved, in complex inter-relationships. These might include economic hardship, family and peer relationships, gender, subculture values, various uses of TV by individual children, and so on."

As a conclusion, family is a best theme in the cartoon. That is because family is a place, which can protect our safety and depend to. According to Raplh Eggleston, an artistic coordinator of The Incredibles, "In The Incredibles, the characters are cartoony heroes but they can be hurt and they have this family dynamic that makes them believable."

2.1.2 Element of cartoon

What are the basic elements of cartoons? According to Iril C. Kollé, the author of *Drawing Cartoon Characters with a Graphics Tablet*, those elements of cartoon character are divided from shape, proportion, identity, and expression. Create a shape is easy to know what parts characters are made of. Example, the shape of nose, hair style, and eyes will be recognized if the expression changes.” Kollé believes that proportions are very important for recognizing the character and getting it right in various situations. However, the character identity must have an easily recognizable figure and a simple outline drawing with colour. After have established an identity for character, it needs to look at attitudes and expressions. Such as, how the character walks, moves, makes gestures, and shows expressions. It is very important to have decided upon the character's personality when starting with expressions.

Polley Keener point that, “Cartoons are simple, direct, and bold- in short, attention getting, and memorable.”

As a conclusion, a good cartoon is simple and can get children memorable. “Style your characters simply; they will stand out better against detailed background and will be easier to draw.” said by Polley Keener.

2.1.3 Type of Cartoon Character

There are many types of cartoon characters, such as villains, heroes, cute characters, and nervous character, among others. Most type of cartoon character currently in use is heroes and villains. Such as, *The Incredibles*, and *PowerPuff Girls*.

In 1995, Cartoon Network premiered the Powerpuff Girls in “world Premeire Toons”. The Powerpuff Girls are super heros. They use their ultra-super powers to fight crime and the forces of evil. Blossum is the leader of the Powerpuff Girls and runs the hotline phone. As a Powerpuff Girl, she has the powers of laser vision, super strength, ability to fly, ice breath and fire breath. Her element is “everything nice”, her color is pink, and she is smart, loyal and dependable. Bubbles is the sensitive Powerpuff Girl. Her role is to cheer up the Powerpuff Girls and to come up with alternate plans. She has the powers of laser vision, and super strength. She has the ability to fly, and speaks Squirrel and Spanish. Her element is “sugar”, her color is blue, and she is bubbly, sweet, and cute. The last Powerpuff Girl is Buttercup who is the toughest Powerpuff Girl. She has the powers of laser vision, super strength, and the ability to fly. Her element is “spice”, her color is green, and she is tough and grouchy.

Pokemon and Crayon-Shin Chan are another type of character cartoons. Pokemon are a class of unique little Pocket Monsters that battle each other when instructed to do so by their trainer. In the Pokemon world, human beings act as Pokemon trainers and capture as many of the Pokemon creatures as they can. The captured Pokemon then join the trainer’s team and help them capture other Pokemon, enabling the trainers to become “Pokemon Masters”. However, Shin-chan is a small kindergarten-age boy with Chuck Manson eyebrows and a very distinctive voice that will burn itself deep into your brain. Much of Shin-chan’s actions and speech would definitely be considered adult in nature and inappropriate for children.

As a conclusion, there are several types of character cartoons to fulfill different genre’s demands. The types are always related to the positive behavior of character cartoon.

2.2 Questionnaire

The method used to collect primary statistics for this research through questionnaire. There are 10 questions prepared in questionnaire for the children. Children are between 7 year old and 12 year old in Malaysia.

2.3 Interview

Another method for collecting the data is through interview. This is done randomly by choosing parent, different races of children and asked them few questions related to the current type of cartoon that children like.

CHAPTER 3

Analysis of Questionnaire's and Interview's Results

3.1 Introduction

The methodology used to gather the primary data for research is through face-to-face interaction with the children using questionnaires and interview. A sample of 100 Malaysian children was chosen to answer the questionnaires regardless of races and standard of living.

3.2 Questionnaire Analysis

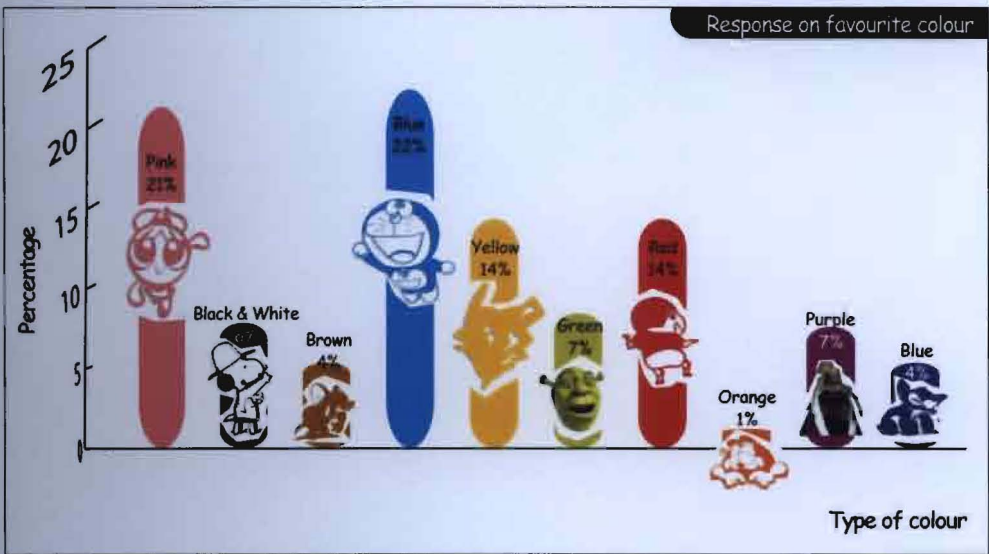


Figure 3.1 Response on favourite colour

Figure 3.1 is a chart showing the children response on their favourite colour. The result from the questionnaire shows that most of the respondent preferred bright, striking colour to dull colour. From the chart, it is noticed that blue the favourite colour of most respondents, closely followed by red, pink and yellow.

From this result, it can be concluded that children like bright and striking colour for as their cartoon character. These colours are normally very attractive and are always make them cheerful and happy. Blue is the colour of chosen for Doreamon by its cartoonist. Blue is the coolest colour - the colour of the sky, ocean, sleep, and twilight. Blue symbolised youth, truth and peace. Blue is also calming. Most of the girls like pink, which is the colour chosen for Power Puff Girl by its cartoonist. Pink is the sweet side of red. It symbolised love and beauty.

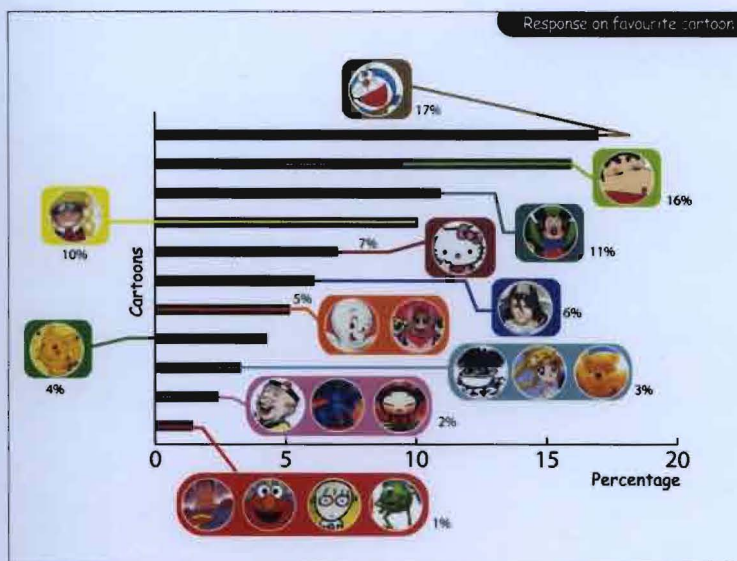


Figure 3.2 Response on favourite cartoon

Figure 3.2 is a chart showing the children response on their favourite cartoon. The result for this question in the questionnaire shows that Doreamon scores the highest as the favourite cartoon. From the interviews, the children said the reason they like Doreamon is because it has the amazing “power pocket”, which stores a lots of things. For some of the children interviewed, Doreamon (the character itself) is their hero, because it always saved Nobita (the owner of Doreamon in the cartoon) when he is in trouble.

Crayon Shin Chan is the second most preferred cartoon. From the interviews, children favour Shin Chan is because it is a comedy and they love the jokes. Some parents respond was, when Shin Chan in on, their child can turn from crying to laughing is just a split second.

The other cartoons where were most favour by the children are Naruto, Mickey Mouse, Sailormon, Hello Kitty and Power Puff Girl. These cartoons have the

characteristics of cute and superhero, with use their ultra-super powers to flight crime and the forces of evil.

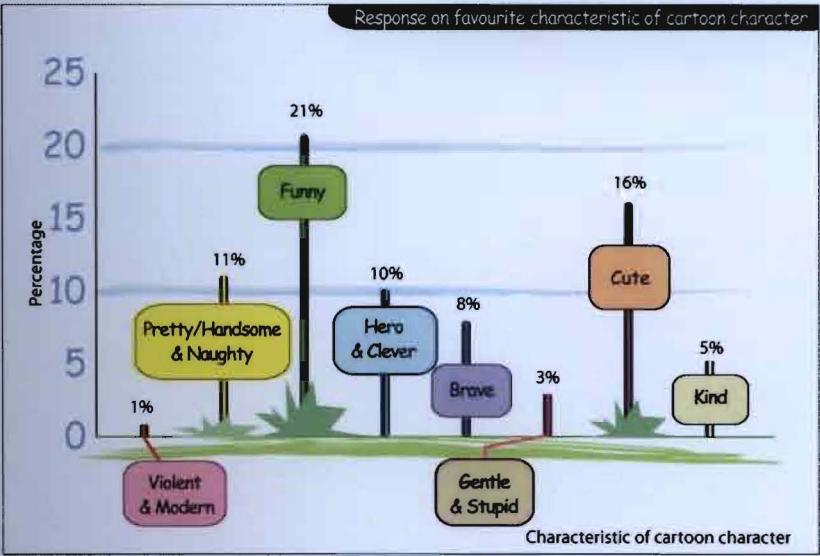


Figure 3.3 Response on favourite characteristic of cartoon character.

Figure 3.3 is a chart showing the children response to the favourite characteristic of cartoon character. The funny characteristic of cartoon attracts most children. The main reason why children enjoy funny cartoons is because they are still in the developing stage on their emotional feelings. Funny is easily adapted and is usually shown with a smile on the face or laughter.

The next favourite cartoon characteristic is cute. This is because cute is a delicate and attractive type of beauty commonly associated with youth, innocence, and helplessness. However, children also like the characteristic of pretty or handsome, hero, clever and brave. This all characteristic can find in Doreamon, Crayon Shin Chan, Mickey Muse, Power Puff Girl, and Hello Kitty.